



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES - WILDLIFE DIVISION

PHEASANT AND QUAIL COOPERATORS EARLY SEASON REPORT

Early season reports from pheasant cooperators allow biologists to quickly assess hunter success and local field conditions across Michigan's Lower Peninsula (Zones 2 and 3) at the beginning of the pheasant season. This report summarizes their responses for October 20-23, 2007.

Cooperators returned 57 surveys and hunted 323 hours in 27 counties during the survey period. Fewer cooperators returned early season reports in 2007 than in 2006. Hunters flushed an average of 0.6 roosters per hour statewide (Table 1). This is similar to the average flush rate of 0.7 roosters per hour statewide in 2006. Individual counties having at least 10 hours of hunting with the highest rooster flush rates were Lenawee, Gratiot, Hillsdale, St. Clair, Huron, and Saginaw (Table 2).

Most respondents (31%) thought pheasant populations were the same as last year in the areas they hunted. However, many cooperators thought that populations were slightly down (21%) or down (29%) from last year (Table 3).

Hunters commented that the weather was very warm during the season opener, with windy and dry conditions in most areas. Many noted that the weather and standing crops may have contributed to low success. Comments ranged from "light hunting pressure" to "heavy hunting pressure." Comments on pheasant numbers ranged from "more birds" to "no birds." These comments are similar to those in recent years, indicating pheasant numbers and habitat are unevenly distributed in Michigan.

Table 1. Rooster and hen flush rates by zone and year for October 20 - 23.

Zone	2006			2007		
	Hours	Roosters / hour	Hens / hour	Hours	Roosters / hour	Hens / hour
2	0.0	0	0	2.0	1.0	0.0
3	353.3	0.7	0.9	320.8	0.6	0.9
Statewide	353.3	0.7	0.9	322.8	0.6	0.9

Table 2. Pheasant flush rates by county for October 20-23, 2007.

County:	Hours:	Roosters / hour:	Hens / hour:
Allegan	13	0.0	1.3
Barry	5	0.2	0.2
Bay	2	2.5	2.0
Berrien	10	0.9	0.5
Branch	2	1.0	0.5
Calhoun	7	0.4	1.0
Eaton	3	3.0	0.7
Genesee	3	1.0	0.0
Gratiot	23	0.8	0.7
Hillsdale	29	0.7	0.9
Huron	28	0.5	1.2
Ingham	8	2.7	4.4
Isabella	8	0.5	1.6
Jackson	2	0.5	0.0
Lenawee	30	0.9	1.2
Livingston	5	0.0	0.0
Mason	2	1.0	0.0
Mecosta	6	0.3	0.3
Midland	9	1.2	1.6
Montcalm	17	0.4	0.4
Oakland	3	0.7	0.7
Ottawa	4	0.3	0.3
Saginaw	63	0.5	0.3
St. Clair	12	0.7	2.6
Sanilac	8	0.4	0.4
Shiawassee	8	0.0	0.0
Tuscola	15	0.2	0.7

Table 3. Hunter opinions about pheasant populations.

Trend	2006	2007
Up	10%	13%
Slightly Up	2%	6%
Same	22%	31%
Slightly Down	12%	21%
Down	55%	29%

